

Sam D. Hamilton

Regional Director



Sam D. Hamilton is the Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southeast Region, headquartered Atlanta, Georgia. A native of Mississippi and a career employee of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, he provides vision and leadership for Service activities in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. He also oversees the management of 120 national wildlife refuges covering more than 3.2 million acres, 14 national fish hatcheries, five fishery assistance offices, 16 ecological services field offices, and 38 law enforcement offices.

As Regional Director, he oversees the Service's role in the restoration of the South Florida ecosystem, including the Everglades, and is also responsible for an increasing number of habitat conservation plans in the Southeast. These plans are voluntary agreements between the Service and landowners that permit economic development to continue on private lands while conserving threatened and endangered species.

Hamilton spearheads a renewed commitment to the Region's national wildlife refuges — public lands that provide a multitude of benefits to wildlife and people — and its national fish hatcheries, which play a key role in managing the Nation's fisheries and aquatic resources. Hamilton was named Southeast Regional Director on October 7, 1997.

No newcomer to the Service's Southeast Region, Sam is one of only seven Service regional directors nationwide.

He has also previously served as the Geographical Assistant Regional Director for Area II, a senior policy advisor to the Regional Director on endangered species, wetlands conservation and habitat restoration. He provided leadership for a broad array of Service programs dealing with conservation biology and natural resource management throughout Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. He also oversaw the management of 34 national wildlife refuges, five national fish hatcheries, and six ecological services field offices in these states.

"My greatest challenge is to help bring environmentalists, hunters, fishers, biologists, landowners, state and federal agencies, and business people together to help us save and enhance what makes America great — our treasured wildlife resources," said Hamilton. **"I am blessed with the opportunity to serve America with such a fine group of people, committed to a deeply meaningful mission, and in such a great place and time."**

He has also been the Southeast's Assistant Regional Director-Ecological Services, overseeing the management of the Region's 16 ecological services field offices. The Ecological Services Program is responsible for implementation of the Endangered Species Act and Service activities associated with the Clean Water Act wetland and coastal programs, Federal water resource development programs, and the environmental contaminants program.

Prior to coming to Atlanta, he served as the Service's Texas State Administrator, headquartered in Austin, Texas, where he was responsible for overseeing implementation of the Endangered Species Act and other environmental statutes throughout the State. He served four years in Washington, D.C., as special assistant to the Service's Director and Deputy Director, while on staff in the Division of Habitat Conservation and as staff to the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee in the House of Representatives. He served another seven years of his Service career in Mississippi and Alabama.

He was the recipient of the Alabama Wildlife Federation's 1986 Water Conservationist of the Year Award for efforts to restore historic river flows and fisheries to the Coosa River. Sam's career in conservation began with his early experience in the Youth Conservation Corps at Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge in Mississippi. He is a native of Starkville, Mississippi, and a 1977 graduate of Mississippi State University. He and his wife, Becky, a native of Jackson, have two sons, Sam and Clay. He enjoys the outdoors and is an avid hunter and angler.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the benefit of the American people.



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